How To Improve Safety By Setting The Right Goals

Every employer wants to improve safety in the workplace. Effective goal setting can assist in achieving that aim and set up employees for success. Goal setting invites employers to drill down into an issue and implement actions that create change.

Setting goals helps employees and management concentrate on a tangible result while fostering team building. When everyone works to meet common goals, it encourages camaraderie.

How can employers identify the best safety goals for their workplaces? Share these tips to find areas to improve and see results.

1. Set realistic goals

It's critical to focus on realistic goals. Trying to hit an unrealistic goal is discouraging. For example, if you tried to run a marathon without training, you might feel demoralized a few miles into the race and drop out.

In that same vein, a wide-ranging goal like eliminating all workplace injuries sounds great, but it's not achievable. Injuries can happen even in the safest workplaces. Instead, target a more attainable goal, such as reducing lost-time injuries by 10%.

2. Make your goals tangible

Notice that our example above includes a precise number. The best way to measure progress is to make goals tangible so everyone can see how they're doing — and how far they must go. Seeing progress keeps everyone motivated. A specific, concrete goal might be having fewer than 10 burns in your kitchen this year, and you could track progress by displaying a chart or sending out monthly progress reports.

3. Reassess goals regularly

When goals are met, try to determine why. When goals aren't met, try to determine why. Examining what is and isn't working can spark effective changes in strategy. Goals may also need to be adjusted based on unforeseen circumstances. For instance, if a busy restaurant hires five new cooks, the burn goal set when the kitchen had fewer employees may no longer be realistic.

4. Involve different people in goal setting

Getting people at all levels of the company involved in goal setting increases buy-in. Safety depends not on one person but on many people with differing perspectives making good choices. The more people involved in an initiative, the more likely it will succeed.

5. Ensure everyone participates

Safety goals are for everyone, not just employees, and workers want to see people at every level putting in the effort to achieve a goal. In the case of a policy change, such as requiring everyone to wear slip-resistant shoes to reduce slips and trips, have management follow the new rules, too. It will create a more supportive atmosphere.

6. Look at patterns and trends

They can direct you to better goals. Read injury reports from the past several years. Do you notice, say, more strains or sprains reported or fewer slip-and-fall accidents? The data can steer you to goals that benefit your employees the most.

Visit Pinnacol's blog to see more tips on how to keep your employees safe. Contact our safety consultants at safetyoncall@pinnacol.com to ask questions about goal setting.

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